



2026–27 POLICIES & COMPETITION RULES

Administered by the Mid-Atlantic Premier League
US Club Soccer State Cup

PART 100 — COMPETITION ADMINISTRATION

Rule 101 — Competition

The Mid-Atlantic Cup is a US Club Soccer State Cup competition administered by the Mid-Atlantic Premier League (MAPL).

The competition provides a high-level, single-elimination championship for qualified US Club Soccer-carded teams throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

The Mid-Atlantic Cup is intended to provide meaningful competition while creating a pathway to the US Club Soccer National Cup.

All participating clubs, teams, players, coaches, team officials and spectators are subject to these Competition Rules and all applicable US Club Soccer policies.

Where these Competition Rules are silent, applicable US Club Soccer and U.S. Soccer policies and the IFAB Laws of the Game shall apply.

MAPL reserves final authority to interpret and administer these Competition Rules.

Rule 102 — Age Groups

The Mid-Atlantic Cup may offer competition in the following age groups:

- U12
- U13
- U14
- U15
- U16
- U17
- U18/19

Age groups may be combined, modified or not offered based upon the number and competitive level of applicants.

Rule 103 — Seasonal Competition

The Mid-Atlantic Cup will generally operate according to the following seasonal structure:

Fall Competition

- U12
- U13
- U14

Spring Competition

- U15
- U16
- U17
- U18/19

MAPL reserves the right to modify the seasonal placement of an age group when necessary.

Rule 104 — Entry Fee

The Mid-Atlantic Cup entry fee is:

\$350 per team + applicable GotSport processing fees.

Submission of an application and payment of the entry fee does not guarantee acceptance into the competition.

Rule 105 — Team Eligibility

The Mid-Atlantic Cup is open to competitive teams properly registered and carded through US Club Soccer.

Eligible teams may include, but are not limited to, teams participating in:

- National 1
- ECNL
- ECNL Regional League
- Pre-ECNL
- Mid-Atlantic Premier League
- Other qualifying US Club Soccer competitions

MAPL reserves the right to review the competitive level of all applicants and determine whether a team is appropriate for the competition.

Rule 106 — Acceptance

The Mid-Atlantic Cup intends to accept up to **16 teams per age group**, with the ability to expand selected age groups to as many as **32 teams** when the size and quality of the applicant pool warrants expansion.

When applications exceed available positions, MAPL may consider:

- League and division level
- Current and previous competitive results
- Strength of schedule
- Tournament results
- Previous Mid-Atlantic Cup performance
- Overall competitive level
- Geographic considerations
- Competitive balance
- Other relevant information available to the Competition Committee

Acceptance decisions are made at the sole discretion of MAPL.

Rule 107 — Competition Format

The Mid-Atlantic Cup shall be conducted as a **single-elimination competition**.

Depending upon the number of accepted teams, brackets may include:

- Preliminary/Play-In Round
- Round of 32
- Round of 16
- Quarterfinals
- Semifinals
- Championship Final

Each match must produce a winner.

Rule 108 — Brackets and Seeding

MAPL shall establish all competition brackets.

Where teams are seeded, the higher-seeded team shall be designated as the home team for preliminary-round matches.

MAPL reserves the right to use seeding, random draw, geographic considerations or a combination thereof when establishing brackets.

Byes may be awarded when the number of participating teams does not create a complete bracket.

All bracket, seeding and draw decisions made by MAPL are final.

Rule 109 — National Cup Advancement

Champions of eligible Mid-Atlantic Cup age groups shall advance through the applicable US Club Soccer National Cup pathway, subject to all US Club Soccer eligibility, registration and participation requirements.

For qualifying age groups designated by US Club Soccer, the Mid-Atlantic Cup provides direct qualification to the US Club Soccer National Cup Finals.

Teams accepting a Mid-Atlantic Cup position acknowledge the responsibility associated with advancement and are expected to participate in the applicable National Cup event if they qualify. US Club Soccer retains final authority regarding National Cup qualification and eligibility.

PART 200 — PLAYER, COACH AND ROSTER ELIGIBILITY

Rule 201 — US Club Soccer Registration

All participating players and team officials must be properly registered and carded through US Club Soccer.

Valid US Club Soccer credentials must be available for inspection on match day.

No Pass / No Play.

A player or team official who cannot demonstrate proper eligibility may not participate.

Rule 202 — Official Competition Roster

Each participating team must establish an official competition roster through GotSport in accordance with applicable US Club Soccer and Mid-Atlantic Cup requirements.

Only properly registered and eligible players appearing on the team's official competition/game-day roster may participate.

MAPL may establish and publish roster freeze deadlines for each seasonal competition.

Rule 203 — Player Eligibility

A player must:

- Be properly registered through US Club Soccer;
- Meet the applicable age requirements;
- Appear on the team's eligible Mid-Atlantic Cup roster;
- Possess valid US Club Soccer credentials; and
- Meet all applicable US Club Soccer State Cup/National Cup eligibility requirements.

The use of an ineligible player may result in forfeiture and additional sanctions.

Rule 204 — Cup-Tied Players

A player may represent only one team within the same Mid-Atlantic Cup age-group competition during the same seasonal competition.

Once a player participates in a Mid-Atlantic Cup match for a team, that player becomes cup-tied to that team for that competition.

A cup-tied player may not subsequently participate for another team in the same Mid-Atlantic Cup age-group competition.

Rule 205 — Coaches and Team Officials

All coaches and team officials present in the technical area must:

- Be properly registered through US Club Soccer;
- Possess all required credentials and risk-management clearances;
- Appear on the official Game Card; and
- Present a valid pass when requested.

Only properly credentialed team officials may occupy the technical area.

PART 300 — SCHEDULING & MATCH ADMINISTRATION

Rule 301 — Play-By Dates

Each competition round shall have an established Play-By Date.

The Play-By Date represents the final date upon which the match may be completed without written approval from MAPL.

Teams may mutually agree to play earlier than the established Play-By Date.

Matches may not be played after the established deadline without prior written authorization from MAPL.

Teams entering the Mid-Atlantic Cup are responsible for ensuring they can meet all published competition deadlines.

Rule 302 — Fall Play-By Dates

For the 2026 Fall Mid-Atlantic Cup:

Round of 32: September 20

Round of 16: October 4

Quarterfinals: October 18

Semifinals: November 1

Championship Weekend

Girls Championships: November 14
Mercer County Community College

Boys Championships: November 15
Mercer County Community College

Championship dates, times and locations are established by MAPL and are not subject to team scheduling requests except under extraordinary circumstances.

Rule 303 — Scheduling Responsibility

Following the release of each round, teams are responsible for promptly communicating and scheduling their match.

The home team shall initiate scheduling communication through the **GotSport Game Communications system**.

All substantive scheduling communication should remain within GotSport so that an official record of communication is available to MAPL.

Teams should provide reasonable and varied scheduling options and work cooperatively to complete the match before the applicable Play-By Date.

Rule 304 — Scheduling Disputes

If teams cannot mutually agree upon a date and time, the matter must be referred to MAPL sufficiently in advance of the Play-By Date.

MAPL reserves the right to:

- Establish the match date;
- Establish the kickoff time;
- Establish or change the venue;
- Change the designated home team;
- Require the match to be played on a particular date; or
- Take other action necessary to complete the competition.

Failure or refusal to comply with a scheduling determination may result in forfeiture.

Rule 305 — Home Team Responsibilities

Unless otherwise directed by MAPL, the designated home team is responsible for:

- Securing an appropriate field;
- Entering/confirming the match information in GotSport;
- Confirming the match date, time and location with the opponent;
- Providing a properly lined and safe playing surface;
- Providing appropriately anchored goals;
- Providing an appropriate match ball;
- Ensuring sufficient lighting for the entire match when necessary;
- Providing an alternate uniform in the event of a color conflict; and
- Fulfilling all other home-team responsibilities established by MAPL.

Rule 306 — Uniform Conflict

The home team is responsible for resolving any uniform-color conflict unless otherwise directed by the referee or MAPL.

Teams should communicate uniform colors prior to match day.

The referee has final authority regarding whether uniforms are sufficiently distinguishable.

Rule 307 — Game Cards and Passes

Each team must have access to its official GotSport Game Card/Match Card.

Prior to the match, teams must provide the referee with:

- Official Game Card/Match Card;
- Valid US Club Soccer player passes; and
- Valid US Club Soccer coach/team official passes.

Players and team officials must be properly listed and eligible to participate.

No Pass / No Play.

Rule 308 — Referee Fees

For all preliminary-round matches through the semifinals:

The home and away teams shall split the referee fees equally.

Each team is responsible for arriving at the match with its required portion of the referee fees.

For all Mid-Atlantic Cup Championship Finals:

MAPL shall cover the referee fees.

Rule 309 — Match Reporting

The official match result must be entered into GotSport following completion of the match.

Teams must cooperate in ensuring that scores and disciplinary information are accurately reported.

Any discrepancy should be reported to MAPL promptly.

PART 400 — RULES OF PLAY

Rule 401 — Laws of the Game

Unless specifically modified within these Competition Rules, all matches shall be played under the current IFAB Laws of the Game and applicable U.S. Soccer and US Club Soccer policies.

Rule 402 — Match Format

Age Group	Format	Ball	Match Duration	Halftime
U12	9v9	Size 4	2 × 30 minutes	10 minutes
U13	11v11	Size 5	2 × 35 minutes	10 minutes
U14	11v11	Size 5	2 × 35 minutes	10 minutes
U15	11v11	Size 5	2 × 40 minutes	10 minutes
U16	11v11	Size 5	2 × 40 minutes	10 minutes
U17	11v11	Size 5	2 × 45 minutes	10 minutes
U18/19	11v11	Size 5	2 × 45 minutes	10 minutes

Teams and referees may not mutually agree to shorten a match without authorization from MAPL, except when necessary due to circumstances governed by the Laws of the Game or emergency conditions.

PART 500 — SUBSTITUTIONS

Rule 501 — U12

At U12, **unlimited substitutions** are permitted.

Substitutions may occur at an appropriate stoppage with the permission of the referee.

Rule 502 — U13–U14

At U13 and U14, teams are permitted **unlimited player substitutions over a maximum of three (3) substitution moments per team, per half, plus halftime.**

Multiple players may enter during a single substitution moment.

Halftime does not count as one of the three substitution moments.

If both teams make substitutions during the same stoppage, the stoppage shall count as one substitution moment for each team making substitutions.

Rule 503 — U15–U18/19

At U15 through U18/19, teams are permitted **unlimited player substitutions over a maximum of four (4) substitution moments per team, per match, plus halftime.**

Multiple players may enter during a single substitution moment.

Halftime does not count as one of the four substitution moments.

If both teams make substitutions during the same stoppage, the stoppage shall count as one substitution moment for each team making substitutions.

Rule 504 — Head Injury Substitution

If a player is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a match, the player must be removed from play and may not return to that match.

- Allowance: Each team can make a maximum of two head injury substitutions per match.
- Opposition Allowance: The opposing team is allowed to make an equivalent extra substitution when a concussion sub is used.
- Exemption: These replacements do not count against a team's standard three regular substitution windows/limits.

PART 600 — DETERMINING A WINNER

Rule 601 — Tied Matches

Every Mid-Atlantic Cup match must produce a winner.

If the score is tied at the conclusion of regulation, the match shall proceed to extra time.

Rule 602 — Extra Time

Two **10-minute extra-time periods** shall be played.

Both periods shall be played in their entirety.

There is no golden goal or sudden-death overtime.

Teams shall change ends between extra-time periods.

Rule 603 — Extra-Time Substitutions

During extra time, each team shall be permitted unlimited player substitutions during:

- One substitution moment during the first extra-time period;
- The interval between extra-time periods; and
- One substitution moment during the second extra-time period.

Multiple players may be substituted during each permitted moment.

Rule 604 — Kicks from the Penalty Mark

If the match remains tied following completion of both extra-time periods, the winner shall be determined by kicks from the penalty mark.

Only players eligible and on the field of play at the conclusion of the second extra-time period may participate.

Each team shall initially designate five eligible kickers.

Each team shall take five kicks, subject to the Laws of the Game provision allowing the kicks to conclude early when one team can no longer equal the other's total.

If the teams remain tied after five kicks each, kicks shall continue on a sudden-death basis.

Eligible players who have not yet taken a kick must take a kick before any player may take a second kick.

If one team has more eligible players than its opponent at the conclusion of extra time, the team with the greater number shall reduce its eligible participants to equal the number available to its opponent.

Once every eligible player has taken a kick, players become eligible to take another kick in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

The process shall continue until a winner is determined.

PART 700 — POSTPONEMENTS & ABANDONED MATCHES

Rule 701 — Weather and Field Conditions

The referee has authority over the safety and playability of the field once the match begins.

Prior to match day, the home club is responsible for communicating any known field closure or facility issue immediately.

Teams should make every reasonable effort to reschedule a postponed match before the applicable Play-By Date.

Rule 702 — Abandoned or Terminated Matches

If a match is abandoned or terminated before completion, MAPL shall determine the disposition of the match.

MAPL may determine that:

- The existing result stands;
- The remainder of the match must be completed;
- The entire match must be replayed;
- One team forfeits the match; or
- Another resolution is appropriate.
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MAPL may consider the amount of the match completed, score, reason for abandonment, responsibility of the teams, referee report, misconduct and any other relevant circumstances.

No team may independently declare an abandoned match final.

PART 800 — DISCIPLINE

Rule 801 — Player and Team Official Conduct

Players, coaches and team officials are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the standards of US Club Soccer, U.S. Soccer and the Mid-Atlantic Premier League.

MAPL reserves the right to impose disciplinary sanctions for misconduct occurring in connection with Mid-Atlantic Cup competition.

Rule 802 — Red Cards

A player or team official sent off during a Mid-Atlantic Cup match shall receive an automatic minimum suspension from the team's next Mid-Atlantic Cup match.

MAPL reserves the right to impose additional suspensions or sanctions depending upon the nature and severity of the misconduct.

Suspensions imposed by another governing authority may also apply when required by US Club Soccer or U.S. Soccer policy.

Rule 803 — Spectator Conduct

Each team is responsible for the behavior of its players, coaches, team officials and spectators. Coaches and club officials are expected to assist referees and competition officials in addressing inappropriate spectator behavior.

Spectator misconduct may result in:

- Removal from the facility;
- Suspension;
- Club or team sanctions;
- Match forfeiture;
- Fines; or
- Other disciplinary action.

Abuse, threats or harassment directed toward referees, players, coaches or competition officials will not be tolerated.

PART 900 — FORFEITS & WITHDRAWALS

Rule 901 — Failure to Play

Teams accepted into the Mid-Atlantic Cup are expected to complete all scheduled competition matches.

A team that fails or refuses to participate in a scheduled match without authorization from MAPL may be declared to have forfeited the match.

The official score of a forfeited match shall be recorded as determined by MAPL.

Rule 902 — Withdrawal

A team withdrawing before the application deadline may be eligible for a refund as determined by MAPL.

After acceptance and bracket publication, entry fees are non-refundable except at the discretion of MAPL.

A team withdrawing after the competition bracket or schedule has been released may be subject to forfeiture penalties and reimbursement of costs incurred by the opposing team or MAPL.

Rule 903 — Forfeit Penalties

MAPL may assess the following minimum penalties for an avoidable withdrawal or forfeit:

Round	Minimum Fine
Play-In / Round of 32 / Round of 16	\$250
Quarterfinal	\$350
Semifinal	\$500
Championship Final	\$750

The forfeiting team may additionally be responsible for applicable referee, field, facility and other documented costs.

MAPL reserves the right to impose additional sanctions when warranted.

PART 1000 — PROTESTS

Rule 1001 — Grounds for Protest

Referee judgment decisions are final and may not be protested.

A protest may only concern:

- Misapplication of the Laws of the Game;
- Misapplication of Mid-Atlantic Cup Competition Rules;
- Participation of an allegedly ineligible player or team official; or
- Another competition-administration issue that materially affected the match.

Disagreement with a referee's factual or judgment decision is not grounds for protest.

Rule 1002 — Filing a Protest

A protest must be submitted in writing to MAPL within 24 hours of completion of the match.

The protest must clearly identify:

- The match;
- The specific rule allegedly violated;
- The relevant facts;
- Supporting documentation or evidence; and
- The requested remedy.

MAPL may establish a protest fee.

A protest submitted after the deadline may be denied without consideration.

Rule 1003 — Competition Decisions

MAPL shall review properly submitted protests and determine an appropriate resolution.

Possible remedies may include:

- Denial of the protest;
- Upholding the match result;
- Forfeiture;
- Replay;
- Resumption of a match;
- Player/team official discipline; or
- Other appropriate action.

Competition decisions necessary to maintain the progression of a single-elimination tournament may be deemed final by MAPL, subject to any appeal rights required under applicable US Club Soccer or U.S. Soccer policy.

PART 1100 — CHAMPIONSHIP MATCHES

Rule 1101 — Championship Venue

Mid-Atlantic Cup Championship matches shall be centrally hosted at a location selected by MAPL.

MAPL shall establish:

- Match date;
- Kickoff time;
- Field assignment;
- Home/away designation; and
- Championship event procedures.

Rule 1102 — Championship Costs

MAPL shall provide and pay the referee crew for Championship matches.

MAPL may also provide match balls, awards, event staffing and other championship operations.

Rule 1103 — Awards

Mid-Atlantic Cup Champions and Finalists shall receive awards as determined by MAPL.

Eligible champions shall receive the applicable US Club Soccer National Cup qualification opportunity.

PART 1200 — COMPETITION AUTHORITY

Rule 1201 — Matters Not Provided For

Any matter not specifically addressed within these Competition Rules shall be decided by the Mid-Atlantic Premier League.

- MAPL may consider:
- US Club Soccer policies;
- U.S. Soccer policies;
- IFAB Laws of the Game;
- Competitive fairness;
- Player safety;
- Competition integrity; and
- The orderly progression of the tournament.

MAPL's interpretation of its Competition Rules shall govern the Mid-Atlantic Cup, subject to any overriding authority or required appeal procedure of US Club Soccer or U.S. Soccer.

Rule 1202 — Rule Changes

MAPL reserves the right to amend, clarify or supplement these Competition Rules when necessary.

Any material changes shall be communicated to participating teams.

PART 1300 — TEAM ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By applying to and participating in the Mid-Atlantic Cup, each club and team acknowledges that it:

- Has reviewed these Competition Rules;
- Agrees to comply with all published Play-By Dates;
- Understands that application does not guarantee acceptance;
- Will maintain appropriate US Club Soccer registration and credentials;
- Will cooperate with opponents in scheduling;
- Will comply with MAPL competition decisions;
- Accepts responsibility for the conduct of its players, coaches and spectators; and
- Understands the responsibilities associated with advancement to the US Club Soccer National Cup.

**Mid-Atlantic Cup
Mid-Atlantic Premier League
US Club Soccer State Cup**

2026–27 Competition Rules (Updated 9.1.2026)